

This brochure was developed by the Department of Health and Family Services' Prevention Committee. Material was adapted from St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center *Guide to Health* with their permission.



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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Plain Talk

for parents
about your
2 to 3 year old

Understanding your 2 to 3 year old

Every child and parent is unique.

This brochure highlights some general patterns of growth and development that apply to most children.

As you watch, listen to, and play with your child, you will discover when she or he is ready for new activities and skills. You will find your own ways to use old and new ideas, to fit your individual personality, your family life, and your child's needs.

General Traits

- Behavior may change quickly from loving to independent and back again
- Needs little help in climbing up and down stairs
- Demands a lot of parental attention
- May hold a glass of milk in one hand
- Knows several hundred words and may now speak in simple two to three-word sentences
- Loves to be read to, but may not have the patience to go through a book cover to cover
- Begins to help in dressing (undressing comes first)
- Uses a spoon in feeding
- May achieve toilet training or show interest in using the toilet
- Likes to imitate adult activities
- Enjoys other children but may find sharing difficult

What a Parent Can Do

- Your 2 year old's rebelliousness may be hard to take, but it is a positive stage in your child's development, an attempt to move away from babyhood. ("No" will often mean "yes", so look for other cues as well.)
- Rules should be few. Ask yourself: What are the minimum rules ("no's") needed for this age?
- Allow your child to express all feelings, negative as well as positive.
- Allow your child to "help" with simple tasks.
- If you begin toilet training and your efforts don't pay off in a week or two, your child is not ready yet. Go back to diapers.
- Present nutritious meals and leave it at that. Don't push your child to eat.
- Your child is too young to learn table manners.
- Routines help ease bedtime, leave-taking, meals, etc. A nighttime routine might be taking a bath an hour before bedtime, reading a book, a goodnight kiss, a hug and a tuck into bed.
- Temper tantrums are best ignored. Pay as little attention as possible. Let your children know that you love them but not their actions.

Toys for the 2-3 year old

Cars and trucks

Pail and shovel

Baskets

Crayons (large size)

Large packing boxes

Play dough

Finger paints

Balls

Blocks

Books

Old keys

Riding toys and wagons

Toys that teach shapes

Small animals and people

Hammer and peg board

Doll (soft and washable)

Cloth squares of bright colors (for doll covers, tablecloths)

Large brushes for "painting" with water